

part of its political base who doesn't believe that there should be any border controls, who believes our borders should be open and are oblivious to the danger that poses. So, make no mistake about it, this is both a humanitarian and a security crisis, and the Biden administration's refusal to act has only made things worse.

We know the American people see crime as a big problem, and there are a lot of reasons for that, but the Biden administration needs to address the security breakdown at the border because what is happening there has made our communities even more dangerous.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, well, I think, from the President's comments at the Correspondents' Dinner the other night, it may have taken a year, but, finally, the President and the White House are starting to realize that they have lost the American people when it comes to their agenda. I think it is because you can only betray someone so many times before they stop giving you a 2nd chance, a 3rd chance, or even a 15th chance at doing something.

After 16 months of alternating between anger, confusion, and fear, all Tennesseans can do is just have a laugh at what the White House is saying and how they are trying to spin what is actually happening and how they are trying to tell you that what you are seeing is really not what you are seeing. They know—the American people know; Tennesseans know—that much of what you hear coming out of this administration is coupled with a threat; it is coupled with a falsehood; sometimes it is even coupled with a mandate.

Joe Biden has lost what little control he had, but rather than reexamining his priorities, he has decided to cause as much pain as he can before the Democrats lose power. This is a pattern. The Biden administration doesn't lead; they mandate. They don't come to Congress and say: Let's do this or that; they throw out an Executive order. Then, when those mandates and orders that they are tossing out like they are candy backfire, they come about this by trying to inflict as much pain as they can.

When business owners pushed back on pandemic mandates that made their survival impossible, this administration didn't relent; they doubled down. They just accused everybody who disagreed with them of being a danger to their communities.

We all heard the stories: Oh, they are putting profit over people. Oh, they don't care about their communities. They just want to keep the doors open.

But no—what they wanted to do was serve their communities.

When parents asked questions about what their kids were learning in school, the Justice Department threatened to throw them in jail if they protested curriculum influenced by critical race theory and other radical ideologies. When the administration saw their climate panic message wasn't resonating anymore, they came out with a plan to double down again and take away the few transportation and energy options people could still afford. Their response to historic levels of inflation is to tax and spend the American people into submission.

See, this is the way they do it: If you are a parent, you show up to ask questions about what you are seeing your child study. Then they want to report you and say: You are the one who is causing a problem.

Isn't it amazing how this administration has allowed cancel culture to infiltrate everything that they do?

It is their way or the highway, as we would say in Tennessee, because they plan to run over you; they plan to cause pain. This is not governing; it is punishment—punishment for your beliefs; punishment for your actions; punishment for standing up for the Constitution, for democracy, for freedom of speech. They are going to punish you.

Now, I thought that the administration had hit rock bottom with their response to the recordbreaking inflation they created, but their plan to address Joe Biden's border crisis has been what has taken the cake. It is foolish, and it is dangerous.

The situation along our southern border is bad, and it is getting worse. Just this weekend, I spent some time out in West Tennessee. I was over in Benton County, which is the northwest corner of the State, and talked with Sheriff Kenny Christopher. He told me that his officers are finding fentanyl in about 80 percent of the drugs they seize. Everything is laced with fentanyl. This is marijuana, heroin, gummy bears—everything. Fentanyl is on the loose, running wild. Between 2020 and 2021, 64,000 people in this country died from fentanyl overdoses, and 2,014 of them were Tennesseans. Where is this coming from? It is coming right across that southern border.

It is so important to note that this is a problem that escalated after Joe Biden became President. The cartels knew, with the Border Patrol, that Donald Trump had its back but that now, with Joe Biden, it is running wide open. Every town is a border town, every State a border State. We are losing control over the flow of drugs. The cartels are in control of that southern border. You don't come across without them. Nothing comes across without them. They are so emboldened that

every law enforcement officer I meet with can tell you what cartel hub—that is right, cartel hub—here in this country, on U.S. soil, is setting up their drug trafficking, human trafficking, sex trafficking operations. Control is lost at that border.

In March, CBP recorded more than 220,000 encounters with people trying to illegally enter the country. Fortunately, they were able to use title 42 and expel about 100,000 of those 220,000 individuals.

Title 42 has been a lifesaver for the Border Patrol. Don't believe me. Go ask them. They will tell you: That is a lifesaver. They have used it more than 1 million times to deny entry and ease the strain on their limited resources. They need it. They need title 42, and they will tell you they need title 42.

So, of course, the Biden administration is getting ready to take title 42 away. Let's just open that border up. It is endangering our sovereignty, endangering our people. Every town is a border town, every State a border State; but let's throw caution to the wind, open the border. Come one, come all. We had 160 different countries come across that border last year. Let's see if we can break that record this year—that is what this White House is saying, total disregard for the American people. Because if you take away title 42, you are going to see not 6,000 illegal entries a day, you are going to see 18,000 illegal entries a day.

They know that this is what will happen. And do they have a plan? No, they don't have a plan. They are expecting that 18,000 people a day. That works out to over a half million a month—a half million a month.

Now, you know, Secretary Mayorkas admitted last week in his hearing that he just didn't seem to have a plan, but he was expecting this to happen.

In Tennessee, we have 345 cities, towns, and villages—345. Out of those 345 cities and towns, 90 percent of those towns have a population of 20,000 or less; so it is the equivalent of the population of a typical Tennessee town coming across the southern border every day. How long can we sustain that?

Your State of Illinois, Madam President, you all have about 1,200 towns and cities that are incorporated. You have got 102 counties. Out of those 1,299 incorporated towns and cities, 90 percent of those, likewise, are 20,000 or less in population. Or if you had a half million a month, that is equal to a Naperville, Aurora, and Rockford together. How long could Illinois sustain that?

See, this policy not only affects the border with the United States and Mexico and those towns and communities and counties, it is every county in this country.

When Mayorkas was speaking last week over in the House, what he didn't do was confirm that the administration has a plan to reduce illegal immigration or, indeed, if they care at all about

securing the border. Imagine that: a Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security who does not believe in a secure border. You cannot make this stuff up. You can't make it up.

For weeks now, a bipartisan group of Senators has pressed the Department of Homeland Security for their plan to secure the border, to secure this country. And for weeks, they have ignored our concerns.

As of today, Chairman DURBIN has no plan to summon Secretary Mayorkas for a hearing so we can ask him directly.

Last week, however, things escalated during a hearing at the House Appropriations Committee when the Secretary confirmed that the administration is considering pulling staff and resources out of the VA-run facilities and sending them to the border.

This is crazy. It is not part of the Department of Veterans Affairs' "Fourth Mission" to help the Biden administration save face. But even if it was, the VA is already struggling to serve veterans.

We are on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. Our case backlog for benefits, for healthcare, is over 260,000 cases. And you are going to take resources and medical personnel and administrative personnel and do what with them? Send them to the border.

Getting basic care through the VA has become almost impossible. You hear it. I hear it. We all hear it from our veterans. And they know that these facilities are understaffed. This is why they are wanting to go to community care. And the Agency is experiencing a 15-year high in turnover for nurses.

And what does this administration do? They say: We are going to take the people left working in VA healthcare and administration, we are going to shift them down to the border because the Border Patrol needs some help. Meanwhile, the people who have put on the uniform and have fought for this Nation can't get healthcare. And this administration acts like they don't give a ripping flip about any of it: the veterans, our Nation's sovereignty, securing the border, protecting our citizens, eliminating the impact of drugs that are flooding our streets. To make our veterans suffer, that is unconscionable.

The administration knows that border encounters have consistently increased since the day they took power—they know this; they have watched it—and it appears that they have intentionally and purposefully allowed it.

They know that as long as the border is open, that people from all around the globe are going to come. As I said, 160 different countries last year; of that, 42 known terrorist watch list individuals—42 of them.

But rather than keeping title 42 in place or embracing "Remain in Mexico" or building a wall or giving the Border Patrol the resources they have

asked for years to defend this border, this administration has decided the way to go about this is to let the veterans suffer. If they have waited 3 months, 6 months, a year, they can wait a little longer. That is their thought: Take the resources out of VA and send it to the border.

There is nothing compassionate about this narrative. There is nothing caring. There is nothing right about this narrative.

You know, it is the reason that—as the President said, he knows his approval rating is low. He knows there is a reason for it. He is not doing anything about it. He is choosing not to do anything about it. He is choosing not to shift his priorities.

I will tell you, I have spent a lot of my adult life in the greatest creative community on the face of the Earth. We are surrounded by some writers and storytellers. And I would say that for some of the great authors and storytellers in the neighborhood, they couldn't mash together a plotline as convoluted as this one, because people would say that would never happen in the United States. You would never see us purposefully running up inflation or running up the cost of energy or opening our southern border and allowing terrorists and drug dealers and sex traffickers and human traffickers and gangs to run in.

You would never knowingly allow cartels to set up shop on U.S. soil. You wouldn't do that. But this administration has, and they did it because they know pain is the point. Suffering is the point. We are going to do this to you.

It goes back to what I said many weeks ago. We, as conservatives, have a vision for better days, for hope, for opportunity for all, for preserving the freedom of this great Nation, for preserving our rights, for protecting faith and freedom and families and hope and opportunity. And I fear that my Democratic colleagues, they have got an agenda. The agenda is what we are going to do to you in order to push a Marxist socialist agenda.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. JOHNSON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 546, Joshua Frost, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

Charles E. Schumer, Brian Schatz, Alex Padilla, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jack Reed, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Tammy Duckworth, Angus S. King, Jr., Patrick J. Leahy, Chris Van Hollen, Catherine Cortez Masto, Gary C. Peters, Elizabeth Warren, Jacky Rosen, Ben Ray Lujan, Cory A. Booker, Christopher A. Coons.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Joshua Frost, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk called the roll.

(Mr. HEINRICH assumed the Chair.)

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY), would have voted "nay", and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have voted "nay."

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 36, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 143 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Heinrich	Peters
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Reed
Booker	Hirono	Rosen
Brown	Kaine	Rounds
Cantwell	Kelly	Sanders
Capito	King	Schatz
Cardin	Klobuchar	Schumer
Carper	Leahy	Shaheen
Casey	Lujan	Sinema
Collins	Manchin	Smith
Coons	Markey	Stabenow
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Tester
Duckworth	Merkley	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murkowski	Warner
Feinstein	Murphy	Warnock
Gillibrand	Murray	Warren
Hagerty	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Hassan	Padilla	Wyden

NAYS—36

Barrasso	Fischer	Portman
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Romney
Braun	Inhofe	Sasse
Burr	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Lee	Shelby
Cotton	Lummis	Sullivan
Crapo	Marshall	Thune
Cruz	McConnell	Tillis
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Paul	Young

NOT VOTING—10

Bennet	Hawley	Toomey
Blunt	Hoeben	Tuberville
Cramer	Kennedy	
Graham	Rubio	